

AN EVALUATION FROM THE RELIGIOUS STANDPOINT OF  
THE CONFRONTATION OF OUR WESTERN HERITAGE BY COMMUNISM

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## THE PROLEGOMENA

"Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation governed as ours can endure. The outcome is by no means certain."

These somber words were spoken by a President of the United States in his inaugural address to the nation. This could have been any of our Presidents speaking before any of the great wars; but it was not--it was John Fitzgerald Kennedy on 20 January 1961.

On that day we were not in combat; we were not staring across the carnage of battlefields, we were at peace! If this had been some eschatological prophet, or soap box orator, we might easily write these words off as wild-eyed hyperbole. However, it was our President who declared that we were faced with a threat so terrible that before his term would be ended "we shall have to test anew whether a nation governed as ours can endure"; further, he continued, "The outcome is by no means certain."

Mr. Kennedy was speaking of the challenge which now faces our Western heritage. It will be the aim of this paper to examine and evaluate this challenge from a religious standpoint. It is the conception of this writer that the basis for our Western heritage is a religious one and that this basis is being challenged by a religious deviation. We shall maintain that the basis of the conflict is not simply political but is in the realm of the spirit, therefore ideological. If we were facing mere political conflict, or even a highly technological conflict with advanced weapons, we could face

the future with much more certitude for are we not the most advanced nation, technologically, in the world? The concern of thinking men and women is not whether we can survive a war waged with technological weapons, but whether we can survive an ideological war.

It has been admitted by our government that we have already been invaded. Our defenses are not secure, our ideological battle lines are not impregnable. Mr Kennedy knows, as does the world, that our enemy has already established a well entrenched beach-head and is threatening to break out into our country with an even greater advance.

Only recently, headlines shouted, "STUDENTS RIOT", "CITY HALL INVADED BY UNRULY MOB", "GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BOOED". These headlines were not speaking of incidents in Leopoldville, or Caracas, or Tokyo, the dateline was San Francisco! The mayor of that city stood helpless as communist-led young people from colleges in the San Francisco Bay area marched on City Hall in protest against the hearings of an official committee of the Congress of the United States. This was a vocal and noisy expression of the threat to which Mr. Kennedy referred. These were casualties of the ideological war. These were our own young people. This is proof, in itself, of our weakness in this battle of ideas. We may be able to face and cope with an enemy across the sights of a rifle but we have shown an amazing ineptness to face him in an ideological war.

The forward march of communism is an amazing phenomenon of this century. In this short time it has almost covered the globe.

It is difficult to realize that less than fifty years ago there was only one communist of any note, and he was in exile in Switzerland. Today, less than half a century after Lenin ended his exile, it is a world-wide religion that has seen no boundaries withstand its forward march. It has now crossed the ocean; it now faces our Western heritage--these are the days of crisis and challenge!

In forty-five years the small spring which began with Karl Marx became a healthy stream under Lenin and a full-fledged river under Stalin. It now threatens to become a flood under Khrushchev! For forty-five years this stream has been running parallel with our Christian civilization but now it has taken a serious turn. It appears that these two shall either converge or plunge into each other head on. The knowledge of this possibility precipitated the sober words of Mr. Kennedy's inaugural address.

If this clash can be kept to an ideological one, what is to be the final result? Can a government based upon the ideals and traditions of ours continue to face this challenge without fear? Is there a possibility that these two streams can exist without direct conflict? Is our Western heritage capable, is it strong enough, to exist in the climate of the 1960's?

Before we attempt to examine possible answers to these questions it will be necessary to define our Western heritage, and thus to form an opinion as to whether it is worth surviving. It is essential that we inquire whether our heritage is simply a product of an evolving political situation, plus some background from a bygone classic age, or whether our heritage corresponds to something which

is rooted in the nature of things. Perhaps, if our heritage is a mere product of an environment influenced by thoughts of a bygone age, it should pass on to be replaced by something new. But, if it is a basic part of the nature of the universe, we should so inform ourselves and our children so that they will understand why it is so basic that our heritage should survive...and must survive!

The history of thought, like human history, is made up of interlocking events. There has never really been a "new thought" on the face of the earth---with the possible exception of the "first" one. There is always some connection to the thought that has gone on before; it matters not whether this connection is the result of agreement or disagreement with the preceding one.

This paper, then, shall be concerned with these interlocking thoughts which produced the expression of our heritage as we know it today. We shall also be concerned with the interlocking chain of thoughts which produced its challenge. The first series shall be presented as our thesis--that our heritage is a religious one, evolving from the nature of things, not merely from our environment. The challenge shall be presented as the antithesis, the materialistic, atheistic background of communism. The last part of this paper shall consider the possibilities of this confrontation and its consequences.

## CHAPTER I

### THE THESIS

"The founders of our nation clearly felt that free government is a political expression of religious faith, with basic human rights deriving directly from the individual's creator." Dwight D. Eisenhower<sup>1</sup>

The Bible tells of a prophet who had a dream of a great river flowing through barren deserts bringing life wherever the waters touched. <sup>2</sup> Bedouins of all ages, scanning their parched desert home-lands, must have also had such dreams of a river on whose banks "shall grow all trees for meat: whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because the waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine".<sup>3</sup> This is an ancient expression of man's eternal desire for a better world than that in which he is living at the moment.

People of a parched world have often been offered the fulfillment of such a dream. Man instinctively searches for the river that will provide all of his earthly needs and produce a "leaf thereof for medicine". Many systems, religious and political, oppressive and non-oppressive, have offered men, in exchange for their souls, the direction to a land in which such a river flows. It is always a temptation for him to accept such offers!

The people who left the shores of the old world to pioneer in the new world had such a vision. They had inherited, and they brought with them, a heritage that has come closer to producing a fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision than any system ever known. They had discovered, or better said, a river flowed into their lives that offered them much more than economic plenty, it also created an atmosphere in which man himself was able to grow and an oasis in which he would have the opportunity to reach the fullest potential of his own nature.

The people of this new land soon gathered together and put into words the declaration of their heritage. This was a necessity for their heritage was now being threatened even in the new world. This inheritance they vowed to defend with their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor!

As we mentioned previously, there is no such thing as a completely new thought--all thoughts are interlocking. The great statements of the early American documents of freedom were simply a restatement of very old principles. Principles which had their genesis so far back in history that men could only guess at the time of their origin. Ezekiel's river had its beginning in a spring in the sanctuary of the Lord and it flowed out from under the doors of the temple to become progressively deeper as it flowed into the desert places---so with our heritage. After the waters had flowed for a thousand cubits he measured it and it had become a stream and "the waters were to the ankles" then "he measured a thousand cubits and the waters were to the loins" and "afterwards he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over, for the waters were



risen, waters to swim in."<sup>4</sup>

Such was the beginning of our own heritage. Former President Eisenhower states without equivocation that this great stream which we call our Western heritage "is a political expression of religious faith, with basic human rights deriving directly from the individual's Creator."<sup>5</sup> In other words, the stream had its beginning in the Temple of God! Our heritage is something more than a product of certain environmental influences---it had its beginning in the mind of God. It, therefore, belongs to the nature of things. It is as much a part of the world as the tides, the law of gravity or  $E=MC^2$ . One cannot talk of our Western heritage without taking into account that it is basically a religious heritage bestowed upon man in his cosmic infancy.

It should be made perfectly clear that when we speak of "Western heritage" in this paper we are not speaking of the political framework within which we now enjoy this inheritance. At present the best framework is a constitutional democracy--which is not really a democracy, of course--but a republic. Arguments for or against a constitutional democracy as the ultimate in forms of government, someone else must give---this is not our concern in this paper. We do not maintain that a constitutional democracy need be the only framework within which man can enjoy this stream that had its beginning in the mind of God. Any form of government which gives man the God-given prerogatives intended for him is good!

Our real heritage, then, is not only the political framework, and that is a very valuable heritage, but those ideals and "natural facts" that declare man is a divinely created being of an intrinsic worth because God has bestowed upon him these certain rights and given him a peculiar dignity above all the creation. These are rights that cannot be bestowed or withdrawn by the State. The verbalizing of these rights in the freedom documents of America is only one development of the stream which had its beginning in the sanctuary of God.

True enough, these waters did not explode upon the waiting parched earth with the force of a broken dam, but came to the West, as Ezekiel's river, from a small spring progressing through various stages until it became a river in the deep flowing documents of 1776. We believe that "wherever the river floweth, it shall bring life"---but today it stands in danger of being dammed up by an ignorance and an apathy that is appalling in the face of the ever growing menace of "the other river" that is also flowing across the world, but instead of "bringing life" it is leaving chaos and carnage in its wake.

## I. THE SPRING

The spring in which our heritage had its beginning is to be found in the theology of a most unusual people, the Jew. It was out from under the doors of their Tabernacle in the wilderness and their Temple on Zion that the spring gave birth to the stream and the

stream to the river. The starting point was not in an archaic religion filled with pessimism and determinism, nor with a God who was the personification of this thing or that thing, but their God was the Creator and the Preserver of the universe. These people chose to turn history upside down by maintaining against all apparent reason that the God of the universe had chosen them, a few thousand poor people, to declare to the world that a moral order existed, based upon man's relationship to their God. They were the first to declare that there was a law in the universe above the law of man! This law gave certain rights to men and demanded certain responsibilities from man. Lord Acton enumerates the principles received from the Jew in the following excerpt,

"The example of the Hebrew nation laid down the parallel lines on which all freedom has been won-- the doctrine of national tradition and the doctrine of the higher law; the principle that a constitution grows from a root by process of development and not of essential change; and the principle that all political authorities must be tested and reformed according to a code which was not made by man." 2<sup>A</sup>

The teaching of the Old Testament is clear when it comes to the final authority of God over man. God created him, he had his origin in a primitive couple. The story of Genesis 1 and 2 affirms the integral unity of all men, yet this is a principle that has not been discovered by many people even to this day. This affirmation rebukes any effort which would attach more than accidental significance to national existence or national differences. No nation can lay claim to these prerogatives. The results of usurping the

the prerogatives of God can clearly be seen in the story of the tower of Babel.<sup>6</sup>

Here, in the ancient writings of a strange people, are the headwaters of the doctrine of the dignity of man. Man is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:25-27) and is a little less than the angels (Psalm 8:6). The dignity of each man is rooted in the fact that he is a servant of God alone and not of the king (Leviticus 25:42-45). Man's life and happiness is identified with obedience to God's law (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). The principle of equality of all rulers and people is found under the law (Leviticus 24:22). Disobedience to the law of God is sin (Psalm 51; Psalm 119:53). Divine law is eternal and immutable (Psalm 119:160).

From these headwaters our stream was to flow to even greater depths when we come to another religious phenomenon of the Jews--- the prophets. Prophetic religion brought a new era to Jewish thinking. Man's allegiance to God is not to be conceived of in mere ritualistic and static terms but in terms of social morality. The water is getting deeper, for we hear, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."<sup>7</sup> Social righteousness or justice is the great ideal of prophetic religion. Man, having this wonderful dignity given to him by God, should not violate it nor permit it to be violated. Since God is responsible for the moral significance of human society and human

dignity he expects the cooperation of man in working out the conditions which give moral and righteous living a chance. The actual laws of Moses and the prophets form much of the ethical foundation upon which all Western governments since the decline of Rome have been built. Most of the "thou shalt nots" of the 10 commandments are also the "thou shalt nots" of modern government.

The stream has widened considerably, but in no sense of the word can we yet call it a river! Not even when we come to the emergence of a transcendent personality out of the Jewish family, Jesus Christ, are we able to say that liberty, equality, and the divine rights of men were well known facts. At His time men were still being ground under the feet of other men. However, with Christ, begins a new and strange doctrine---that not only were men made in the image of God as the Old Testament taught, but that by coming into a personal relationship with Him through repentance man could now be a "Child of God". This lends him even greater dignity than his position as a "creation of God".

The contacts of Christ were constantly across national and social lines. The effect of His example, His life, and His teachings were soon to be felt around the world. Christianity was to give a new reason for respecting the dignity of man. Each man regardless of race or nationality was a potential child of God under this new relationship brought into the world by the death of Jesus Christ.

Paul, the great apostle, continued the teachings of Christ and preached the strange doctrine that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of all the earth, and

hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation".<sup>8</sup> Here again is the fact that all men are created by God and are in the "bounds" of his habitation. The privilege of being a Child of God was not to be limited to the Jew. Christ's last commission to His disciples was, "Go ye, therefore and teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you".<sup>9</sup> Paul was to ask, "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also...".<sup>10</sup> The teachings of Christ and of Paul were chrystal clear about the worth of the person. It was a worth that did not come from the state, nor from wealth, nor from social position. The tie between men was to be the tie of brotherhood. They were to love one another. It was this "love one another" attitude that was to confound the world into which this message was to be taken. The waters now have begun to take on the aspects of a full size stream.

Before we move on to further discussion of this widening stream, one cannot overlook the contribution of the Greeks and the Roman secular world to certain aspects of our Western heritage. Even the Church was later to feel the impact of the "great greeks". The Graeco-Roman influence, however, was not in the main channel of our flowing river; it did not deal so much with the inherent dignity and worth of man, but more with the political framework in which our stream was to be incorporated at a later date.

Greek theory contributed the notion of political liberty,

that is, the sharing of the citizen in the control of government. Pericles introduced the ideal that power ought to be equitably diffused so as to afford equal security for all. He declared that for one part of society or class to govern the other would be tyrannical. He was against this, not so much because it threatened the moral dignity of the individual, but because it was against the welfare of the state to have its people live under tyranny. "It was not in the nature of any Greek thinker, accustomed to seeing in the polis a state religion and community whose rights admitted no opposing rights to set forth a doctrine like that of modern democratic constitutionalism." 11

Socrates knew no higher law for man than the law of his own particular state; Plato, with his almost Christian views, employed his mighty intellect to advocate the abolition of the family; and Aristotle, the ablest moralist of antiquity, saw no harm in making raids upon neighboring people for the sake of reducing them to slavery.

Stoicism was the nearest to the Christian ideal, preaching a sort of political brotherhood. Later the cynics began to contribute the idea that in God was the fatherhood from which human brotherhood might be derived. But neither Roman practise nor Stoic philosophy reached the fundamental basis for a doctrine of equality and liberty. It was only within our stream of Christian doctrine that the spiritual nature of man found the supreme affirmation of an equality as brothers, all possessed of souls <sup>of</sup> equal worth before

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the sight of God.

No doubt the Christian Church had absorbed within itself, since the time of the earliest Fathers, a good portion of the ancient classical heritage of civilization and humanism, but the fundamental conception of man's essence and of true humanity was a totally different one, not only in its basis but also in its content.

"The effects of the Church upon the Empire may be summed up in one word, 'freedom'. In a word, authority was seen to be a form of service according to God's will and such service was freedom. It was, however, not from Seneca but from Christ and St. Paul that the Fathers took their constant theme of the essential quality of men before which slavery could not stand...Not only did the fathers establish the primitive unity and dignity of man, but seeing slavery as the result of the fall, they found in the sacrifice of Christ a road to freedom that was closed to Stoicism." <sup>12</sup>

Though the Graeco-Roman contribution to the conception of later forms of democracy was great, we cannot put this influence in the main stream of thought which gave rise to our Western heritage as it is defined in this paper. This is not to overlook its contribution, but to say, simply, that its basis was not the same as the Hebrew conception of the endowed dignity of man.

#### THE RIVER

It did not please the minds of men to broaden the stream of man's dignity and worth into a great river until the 18th century. Some "dredging" had been done in 17th century England with the Magna Carta and the development of the English Common Law, and the continent was to feel the influence of the French Revolution; but it was not



until this heritage was transplanted to the shores of the new world did it finally blossom into a river. Certainly, we cannot overlook the fact that it was shaped prior to this by English thought. Those who first verbalized the ideals of American ideas of liberty and democracy, Jefferson, Madison, and Paine, were disciples of John Locke as well as being steeped in the religious tradition of the day.

Eighteenth century America was the scene of one of the greatest political and social transformations in history. A complete new social and political order was created. The basis for all of this was the stream, the topic of our paper---it had a religious orientation.

One need only look at the great document of liberty to find this out. All men are "endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights". They appeal to the "Supreme Judge of the World" for the rectitude of their intentions, and they express "a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence". Here we have a peculiar entering of the Divine into the politics and ideals of a nation. God had created the world, was above the world, yet He has the ability to intervene in the affairs of men. They were quoting the ultimate source of their ideas as originating in God Himself.

Because these values did originate from God, the Creator of the Universe, there was, therefore, an "oughtness" to the universe. "These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independant states." There may have been some ideas of oughtness before this, but they were based upon an entirely different foundation. This oughtness did not come from the will of the majority, nor

the political usefulness for the state, as in the Graeco-Roman tradition, but this oughtness came from a recognition of a law that lay completely outside of the universe—yet penetrating it.

The development of this in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution is almost biblical and spiritual in tone. It possesses a view of man that has never been put on the printed page before. He now becomes the crown of creation, and possessed a dignity that sets him apart from all the other creatures of the universe.

These ideas are "self evident"; he has certain "unalienable rights", among these, right to freedom, because he is such a being, inherently free! This exempts him from bondage, he ought never to be in bondage. He has a right to equality. This does not deny the differences of men, but it declares that all men, by nature, are entitled to equality of justice and opportunity under law and that no one is entitled by birth or position to advantage or benefits restricted by law to some and denied to others. These rights were to be further enunciated in the Bill of Rights.

On the soil of the new world the new idea of government was that it existed to secure these rights for man. The government can neither bestow nor deny them, it can only protect and implement them. It was a government of checks and balances by the mutual consent of the people.

Our river has now emerged. We have a glorious heritage that dates all the way back to God. This heritage has come through a desert of thought and political action as well as critical social

environments. But wherever the stream was permitted to flow it brought life along its banks. We can not overlook the dark times in history when the stream was clogged by debris, and restricted to very narrow channels. We can be thankful that we live in the day when it burst forth upon the earth in the clear flowing river of freedom and moral values as we know them today.

However, even in this day, there are threats against our heritage. We are, once again, living in dark days because "another river" is threatening to overflow into our Western heritage and destroy it from the face of the earth. Can we endure? We listen, again, to our President as he solemnly declares, "Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation governed as ours can endure. The outcome is by no means certain."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Eisenhower, Dwight D., Letter to the Rt. Reverend Robert R. Brown, Episcopal Bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas, Oct 2, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Ezekiel 47:

<sup>3</sup>Ezekiel 47:12

<sup>4</sup>Ezekiel 47:5

<sup>5</sup>Eisenhower, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup>Lord Acton, Essays on Freedom and Power (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949), p.33

<sup>7</sup>Genesis 11

<sup>8</sup>Micah 6:8

<sup>9</sup>Acts 17:26

<sup>10</sup>Matthew 28:19-20

<sup>11</sup>Romans 3:29

<sup>12</sup>Elliot, William Y. and McDonald, Neil A. Western Political Heritage. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1949)

<sup>13</sup>Cambridge Medieval History, XX, p. 592-593.

## CHAPTER II

"We say that our morality is subordinate to the class struggle of the proletarians. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the class struggle of the proletariat...we say that morality taken from outside of human society does not exist for us; it is a fraud. For us, morality is subordinate to the interests of the proletarian class struggle". V.I. Lenin <sup>1</sup>

In essence the above is anti-thetical to everything we have said in the previous chapter. President Eisenhower spoke of a morality that was accepted outside of man, a morality that went all the way back to God Himself. Communism and the foundation of American morality stand in direct contrast. One might think that we are confusing the issue by attempting to trace the growth of our religious thesis in parallel with what one might call its political antithesis, Communism. However, this is not the case; we are dealing with a religious thesis and its religious antithesis. Let one not permit political oratory, discussions of borders and treaties and other political phenomenon blind one to the fact that communism is, in every sense of the word, a religion. It purports to have the salvation of man for its only objective. In return for this salvation man must deliver his body and soul over to the party. Communism, also, sees itself as a great river that flows out into the desert lands of capitalism and brings life wherever it goes.

History seems to prove that every revolutionary social creed contains an assault on sin, which for Karl Marx was identified with the exploitation of the working man by capitalism. In addition to the doctrine of redemption offered by the communist party, it also

offers a promise of Utopia, it also offers a dream of the perfect society. "The fact is that the Utopianism is the basis for the evil of communism as well as its greatest danger. It provides a moral facade for the most unscrupulous political policy, giving the communist oligarch the moral warrant to suppress and sacrifice immediate values in the historical process for the sake of reaching so ideal a goal."<sup>2</sup>

It has been this blindness to the fact that when one is dealing with communism he is dealing with a religion that has led many well meaning individuals down the party line. Because many of its phrases and platitudes are so idealistic in tone some have even been able to see no conflict with its basic objectives and the objectives of the Christian church.

"To sum up, we have to come to terms with the conviction of the founders and many of the leaders of the communist system, that they have that which is in essence an exclusive system of truth that promises a secular material salvation to the masses of mankind. Without this faith element, communism would never have become world-shaking; it would have been instead one more theoretical system, one more thing for philosophers to discuss. It would not have become the mighty power in history that it is at this moment."<sup>3</sup>

One must see that we are not simply dealing with another philosophy but that we are standing face to face with a demonic power, with a demonic aggressiveness, and a demonic militancy. These people are just as willing to die for their faith as any Christian in the Roman arena. This is what makes the future ominous; the clash of these two streams of thought could very well bring this world into a cataclysmic chaos.

We believe, then, that our struggle is even more serious since we are facing what is, in reality, religious conflict. History has proven that men will suffer and die for communism, and that multiplied thousands have answered the trumpet call for men to look to the party and join in making a new communist world. These are serious times. These rivers are racing from their original sources at opposite ends of morality to either a great converging or a great conflict!

#### THE SPRING

This philosophy had its origin in Karl Marx whose life and thoughts we can touch here only very briefly. It is out of the question even to attempt to give a broad treatment of Marx---for his doctrine forms a whole social philosophy. It includes elements of pure philosophy, philosophy of history, as well as political science. Briefly, we can say that Marx had steeped himself in the heavy abstractions of Hegel and his dialectical idealism. However, it was not so much the thoughts and ideas of Hegel which gave impetus to Marx as it was his methodology. It was Feurbach who gave him, out of his own thoroughly atheistic and materialistic mind, the embryonic thought or body which he was to put on the skeleton of Hegel's dialectical method. Msgr Fulton Sheen puts it another way, "Marx then summoned to the altar of his own construction the groom of dialectics which came from the house of Hegel and united it in marriage to the house of Feurbach and out of that union came the child, dialectical materialism, which Marx adopted as the philosophy of communism."<sup>4</sup>

The purely political elements of Marx's thought are the theories of class struggle and of the proletarian revolution. The idea of the dialectic made Marx look for a clash or struggle as the key to the existing social situation. His theory of economic determinism made him look for this struggle in the economic field. The communist philosophy that came from this is simply that man's ideas spring from the material world and are altered with the economic changes that occur. Therefore, a communist revolution which radically alters economic conditions will inevitably produce profound ideological changes. This is the very basis for our battle, this is exactly where the danger lies---the greatest battle is the ideological one!

\*Again, we would call attention of the reader to the thesis of the first chapter---that man is free because God made him free, he was endowed with this freedom. Against this

"Marx formulates this axiom: 'Man is free only if he owes his existence to himself'. Therefore the recognition of a God, being identical with the loss of independence, is the beginning of unfreedom. Therefore mankind can regain its freedom only by shaling off this double dependance, i.e. by overcoming the capitalist division of labor through communism and by shaling off religion. In the classless society man owes his existence to himself. Therefore communism and atheism are linked together in the very foundation of the Marxist system, in the same way as capitalism is linked together with God. The abolition of capitalism is at the same time the abolition of religion."<sup>2</sup>

Religion must go because it reflects the imaginations and feelings, the fear and longings of a bourgeois-class society. Law, morality, and religion Marx links together as bourgeois prejudices. The communist is able to denounce God and property in the same



breath. To rid the world of private property will in turn rid the world of God.

Communism is a religion. It was given birth by an atheistic materialistic mind...it flowed out from this mind in an ever enlarging stream. It flowed into lands that had become parched by the ineffectiveness of the Christian church; by the sterility of a faith that had become that way through the rationalism and the materialism of the 19th century. Wherever this river flowed it also brought life, but the life it brought into existence can very well be the life that shall destroy ours. It has every intention of conquering the world, of changing the world into a communistic society.

"Gathering it all together in summary, the philosophy which is to change the world is (a) a materialistic conception of history, with the proviso that the materialism is dialectical and not mechanical. The objective truth of the conception is demonstrated (b) by an analysis of the economic basis of the contemporary system. This shows (c) that the vehicle of the Revolutionary change is class conflict, and (d) the ultimate stage of the process is the classless communist society." 6 We might also add that not only will it be a classless society but a Godless society.

#### THE STREAM

Marx died in obscurity, but his assured intransigence lived on to become the creed of Lenin, a man of like caliber. It was he ~~who~~ dug the channel to bring the waters of communism from ankledeep to

a large stream. There are some who would declare that Lenin dug an entirely new channel for a new stream--of which, Marxism was only a very small tributary. He has been accused of revising Marx out of recognition. This may be true in the manner and the time in which each considered a nation ripe for revolution, but they were in complete agreement over the points of discussion in our paper...religion! It was taken for granted by both of them that all religion is a superstructural reflection of a substructural imperfection. Lenin also felt that religion would completely disappear under the communist society, for the conditions which have created religion would also have disappeared. Naturally he accuses the capitalistic societies of fostering religion in order to exploit the proletariat. This, of course, is rooted in the thought we mentioned above, that economic changes would therefore make certain ideological changes a natural occurrence.

In the growth of communism to a world covering system, Lenin has undoubtedly played the most significant role. He was heir to three-quarters of a century of revolutionary ideology. However, he did not stop with a simple elucidation of theory. He was a practical and resolute messianic leader; he made the dream of Marx a reality. He incarnated Marxian doctrine in the political life of a great nation; he led Russia into a new era of great expansion. His emphasis on the dictatorship of the proletariat (a phrase rarely used by Marx), his use of cells and other subversive methods in seizing power, and his insistence upon tight and effective party control in the new socialist states gave him the power to bring the brook to a growing river!

## THE FLOODING RIVER

The system that Lenin and his supporters set up in Russia after the October revolution of 1917 was not to be contained within Russia. Like the black plague it spread across the Russian borders and covered the Baltic nations, then Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania---one can also add 450 million Chinese and the cells of activity in every nation of the world. Who would deny that this stream which began in a small way in the mind of Karl Marx has now become a flood in an amazingly short time.

After Lenin's death the struggle for succession resulted in the elevation of Joseph Stalin as leader of the Soviet Union and of World communism. He was followed in recent years by Nikita Khrushchev. Under these men the party has become a centralized and all powerful bureaucracy controlling the state. Large scale reconstruction programs were inaugurated which have served as models and guides to other countries. Collectivized agriculture has been pushed; there have been successions of purges launched against landlords and wealthier peasants, while at the same time actual, potential, or imagined dissenters and non-conformists were ruthlessly liquidated. National sentiment has been encouraged, and every scientific achievement is made much of in order to milk from it as much impetus toward nationalism as possible. In every way Russia is now a totalitarian state!

Today, communism is everywhere characterized by rigid organization, tight cohesion within the party; but it should be noted that along with this tight party control there is a tremendous flexibility

for tactical purposes. There is a continuous attempt to maintain ideological orthodoxy and to hold all activities stemming from it with an iron hand. Deviation is not permitted from its basic purpose or from the main lines of strategy that the communist power bloc deems essential to its present and future interests.

World conquest is the goal. To achieve that goal they will stop at nothing. According to plan they will utilize methods that will set neighbor against neighbor, class against class, nation against nation in order to stir up dissension and dissatisfaction everywhere. This is the soil in which communism grows. In the relentless drive toward their goal they will work on the minds of men; they will exploit every human hope and discontent. This will be done with a demonic enthusiasm for modern communism has not lost its ability to imbue its adherents with great passion and energy.

What then, shall we do? What are we capable of doing? There is no doubt about the fact that we are already engaged in a religious war with communism---for we are fighting them for the souls of men. Already, as we have noted previously, there have been many casualties in our own land. We have shown weak-spots. We face harsh realities. Some of us are stunned that among our own countrymen that there would be many who preferred communism to our democratic way of life. If we have shown these weak-spots, can a nation governed as ours survive? Can a nation whose philosophy is built upon a respect for the dignity of man survive in a war against an ideology where the individual is worthless? Do we have any hope in a morality which we believe originates outside of man when it comes in contact with an ideology which declares

"there is no morality except that which man makes himself."

Is there any chance that we might have world peace by permitting these two streams to converge, and hope that the best out of both of them will survive? Is it possible to rechannel the head-on onslaught so that both of these streams may flow within their own banks? Can we avert a conflict without compromising our own Western heritage? Is the only answer armed conflict? These are the questions that are weighing down the hearts and minds of men who guide our political destiny.

We have seen that the Western appreciation for the moral dignity of man, and its attempt to preserve that dignity within the democratic form of government had historical roots in the throne of God. It is a sad commentary that the eruption of inhumanity, lawlessness, and depersonalization which we have experienced during recent decades also has deep historic roots paralleling our great heritage. The question arises, why have those who have believed in the moral dignity of man not been able to "sell" it to the whole world in such a long historical period? We will attempt to give an approach to an answer in the next chapter.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> (Edited), Lenin on Religion, (London: Martin Lawrence, Ltd) p.56. Lenin speech to the Third All-Russian Congress of the Young Communist League, October 3, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1953), p.54.

<sup>3</sup> Emil Brunner, Christianity and Civilization, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1949), p. 134

<sup>4</sup> Fulton Sheen, Communism and the Conscience of the West, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1948), p. 61

<sup>5</sup> Brunner, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Rogers, Christianity and Communism, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1951), p. 83.

### CHAPTER III

"It is inconceivable that the Soviet Republic should continue to exist for a long period of time side by side with imperialist states. Ultimately, one or the other must conquer."<sup>1</sup>  
V.I. Lenin

We have a problem! It is a fact that these two great powers face each other with the capability of waging a nuclear war so terrible the human mind almost rejects it. These two powers are heirs of a political and moral philosophy opposite in essence. It is the avowed goal of communism to erase from the face of the earth every vestige of democracy. This can clearly be seen in the above prologue. The communist world intends that the stream of their heritage should flow into ours, completely changing the structure and the philosophy of our heritage. For them, there is no quandary as to world goals---that their goal is to be the one controlling power of the world is clearly seen in these words of Stalin,

"The Soviet Power is so constructed that, being international by its intrinsic nature, it systematically fosters the idea of unity among the masses and impels them toward amalgamation...let us hope that by forming our confederate republic we shall be creating a reliable bulwerk against international capitalism and that the new confederate state will be another decisive step toward the amalgamation of the whole world into a single World Socialist Soviet Republic."<sup>2</sup>

As far as the communist is concerned, the problem of what to do is solved. This also gives us an answer to our question---we are given a choice: we can have amalgamation and victory for the communist or we can have conflict! The communist has said that it is impossible for these two rivers to exist side by each,

communism must and will prevail! It is our opinion as to how this is to be accomplished is of little consequence to the modern communist- as long as it is done. If necessary, it may be accomplished by out and out revolution, by force. However, modern history has clearly shown that the communist is aware that in the atmosphere of present world politics he need not resort to force because he can gain the same ends at a much cheaper price. He has seen that by just waiting and by sowing internal seeds of discontent the same results can be obtained. The reader might note how much of the world has come under the realm of communism and how little of this was taken without a shot being fired!

The communist has thrown the gauntlet at the feet of the Western world, the challenge has been given. What shall be our response? In today's world, we will preserve freedom and peace only if those who count themselves responsibly free will do what is demanded by the circumstances of our time.

Some in America seem to be amazed that such a challenge can be given by a political system which is less than fifty years old. But this is no political upstart of a pup barking and nipping at the heels of a mature democracy; this is a fully mature wolf after the arteries of the heart!

The knowledge of this upsets us! What happened to a Christian society that would permit an atmosphere to be created in which such an anti-God, anti-Christ organism would be permitted to grow so large that it would become a threat? We cannot hide our faces and say that it isn't so....communism has broken the defenses of our



Western heritage. There is always only one reason for the breakthrough of defensive lines and that is weakness on the part of the defenders. Breakthrough only comes from the inability or the unwillingness of the defenders to defend their position.

Since our position is a religious one; since we believe our culture only makes sense because it was founded in God and preserved because of man's relationship to God, then the source of our weakness must lie within the religious framework of our culture. This is not too difficult to determine. It is easy to see that our weakness lies within ourselves. When communism has succeeded it has succeeded because our culture did not have the inner power nor the inner strength to withstand strong exterior forces. How strange this is in the light of the early Church in the Roman arena or on the frontiers of a pagan world nearly two thousand years ago! Those, through whom our heritage came, were such a small group---they appeared so insignificant when Rome shook a mailed fist in their face. Their reaction was not fear, nor did it put them in the position of becoming mere defenders of their faith, but it did turn this small band into a mighty marching army of a few people that brought Imperial Rome to her knees in capitulation. How vastly different is the scene today when there are millions of Christians all over the world and we must speak in terms of the defense rather than in terms of the offense.

The reason for this inner weakness is the paganization and the secularization of our culture in the last two or three centuries. Only within such an atmosphere could communism ever have survived. Communism can never exist where the culture is truly

Christian. We can very truthfully say that the ideology of communism rose out of the secularized remnants of a Western civilization whose soul was once Christian. There are very many students of communism who say that the origin of the philosophy was not Eastern, not Russian, but Western; totally and thoroughly Western in nature. In one of his writings, Msgr. Fulton Sheen very sharply says,

"Where did the philosophy of communism start? Not in Russia, but in the Western world of the last century. It is Western in origin, its philosophy is German, its sociology French, and its economics English. Communism is potpourri, a hodgepodge of all the cheap, deistic, aufklarung, atheistic, agnostic thinking of the Eighteenth century, and what Leon Daudet called the 'stupid nineteenth century'."<sup>2</sup>

It might also be noted that each of the countries to which Msgr. Sheen referred are all so-called "Christian countries".

It has been within the liberal and secular atmosphere of the modern Western world that communism received its birth. The wave of secular and skeptical liberalism that has swept across the Western world since the eighteenth century has created this tragic void in the Western soul. It has been this very same paganization of culture that not only gave rise to communism, but also has so weakened our national fabric that it has opened up the restraining dams and bulwarks built up against such "isms" through the years by our long Christian heritage. Because these are weakened we are now threatened with a flood of atheistic totalitarianism.

Here lies the threat we should fear! Here lies the threat we should fight with every moral and spiritual weapon we have at our

disposal. This is an insidious enemy of our own producing. Msgr. Sheen also says,

"Communism represents an active barbarism outside Western civilization which has made inroads because of the passive barbarism within, which manifested itself in the general demoralization of society. It is the passive barbarism from within which contributes to some extent to active barbarism without for, as Toynbee says, sixteen out of the nineteen civilizations which have decayed from the beginning of history until now, decayed from within." <sup>4</sup>

Dr. Emil Brunner adds, "The last three centuries, seen from the spiritual point of view, represent a history in which step by step the central and fundamental idea of the whole western civilization, the idea of the dignity of man, was undermined and weakened." <sup>5</sup>

We cannot fail to see that in these past three centuries the Western world has moved away from the Christian starting point toward a very naturalistic and nihilistic goal. This can do no other than to lead to chaos and totalitarianism of one sort or the other. If man is nothing but the highly developed brain-species of the mammal family, ideas such as man's dignity, personality, rights, and human destiny lose their meaning. This so-called emancipation from Christianity and its "myth" that modern liberalism and the present secularization of society has brought upon our land has ended in a stark crude naturalism within which there is little or no room for human values. In this setting atheistic, godless capitalism or modern atheistic, godless communism are in reality one and the same thing as far as ultimate ends are concerned. As we noted earlier, "Communism is related to our materialistic Western civilization as putrefaction is to disease." <sup>6</sup>

In this reference I feel the Christian Church stands with a heavy load of guilt. She has been entirely too silent, too submissive, too entangled, too courting of this materialistic age to have had the impression that could have been made by an active, virile, organization of God. In the days when communism came to power the Russian Orthodox Church was too political, the Catholic<sup>Church</sup> in Austro-Hungary was a mere department of the state, Anglicanism in England had lost touch with the people, Protestantism in America had become vaporous because of its entanglement with theological liberalism. Communism came upon the stage when there was a desperate need for filling a void; the manifesto became a dynamic that was lacking in the Christian Church. Religion was not alive among the masses. I say, therefore, that Communism would never have had the appeal it has had if the Church had exercised the influence it should have!!

Certainly, we can condemn the age for being godless, for pursuing atheistic and materialistic causes. But what caused the age to be materialistic? Is not this the mission of the Church to oppose, condemn, thwart the growth of such a force? Is this admitting there are stronger forces loose in the world than the Church has available; or is it that the Church is not making use of available resources?

It is not the purpose of this paper to lay blame, but simply to examine the conflict. But one cannot examine the conflict without noting the above glaring weakness of the witnessing organization of God.

What, then, is the remedy? What will keep the ideological dam from bursting? How can we keep communism from polluting the

stream of our glorious Western heritage? Certainly this cannot be done by the rattling of nuclear weapons. Some people believe that the best chances of avoiding conflict lies with the consciousness of both sides of the vast and unparalleled horror of the weapons. They say humanity would certainly not unleash such upon brother-humanity. But is this not wishful thinking? Where has man shown such a high degree of intelligence and self-restraint before, when he held in anger other death dealing instruments? Recent history is enough to prove that it is a fallacy to say nuclear weapons will not be used. Anyway, one nuclear weapon may kill a million people, but it does not have the power to slay one idea!

It will take more than mouthing the terms and vocabulary of democracy to build strong dikes against the potential flood. It will take more than an appeal to nationalism and history. It will take more than a spouting-forth of pious soporifics by churches. What we need is an idea that can kill an idea; an ideology that can slay an ideology; a morality that can slaughter another morality, and a spiritual power that can eradicate another spiritual power!! Is not this what the early Church possessed in reality? Is not this the power that almost made a world Christian? I feel that it is! I feel that there must be a genuine revival of the religion that produced our Western heritage. The Christianity I am speaking of is not a mass of idealistic aspirations put together under the guise of religion. A mere moralistic, liberal religion consisting only of noble purposes and high ideals of personal integrity cannot help or sustain man in times like these. It was out of the Bible, out of a

belief in the revelation of God in history that our heritage was born, and it must be the recovery of a genuine, Biblical, creedal, "This I believe", Christianity that will return a certain "starch" to our national fabric. We must return to the faith of the Jew who believed that God could and did intervene in history and worked in this world through his chosen people. This, perhaps, sounds like "Revivalism" but it is only a strong faith that can possibly face the strong faith of the Communist!

A religion with this kind of faith will produce a people who will not pawn off on the world a humanistic democracy. The Christian cannot permit democracy to be a mere humanistic secularism. Modern twentieth century democracy must make its peace with the religious forces at work in the Western world if it is to succeed in uniting all of its friends to its defense.

To summarize: if the banks of our river are to be strong enough to withstand the thrusting power of the polluting force, we must not only have a revival of creedal religion within the Church, but we must also have a rethinking and reshaping of our modern democratic state. It must not be permitted to become a secularistic and materialistic state. We must be made to realize that the strongest defense we have against communist invasion of our Western heritage is an active offense against our own paganization. Never will we be able to understand our times if we think the condition we are in is due to the plotting of several international gangsters, or the creation of a pack of conniving criminals. We must realize what has happened to our world is that it has become materialistic and that it is replacing

a lost God, a lost Church, a lost belief, a lost goal with another god, another church, another belief, and another goal. When rationalism and liberalism cleaned out the house of man's mind it rid itself of what it considered "religious myth" but replaced it with seven demons of horrible power.

These philosophies, our two streams, cannot be amalgamated. They are at opposite extremes. We begin with God and end with God, communism begins with man and ends with man. Communism never rises higher than matter, we attempt to reach the Eternal. What Christianity, our Western heritage, has to offer is as different as heaven and earth from the "offering" of communism. The choice is between God and man---communism has chosen man. What, then, is the need of God, it logically follows that every attempt to destroy religion will be made. No, these two rivers cannot co-exist, and there is no such thing as amalgamation of opposites. Water and oil will never mix!

The time has come for us to re-draw with utmost vividness the line that divides the communist image of man from our Judeo-Christian image of him. We must proclaim to the world that our heritage is a religious heritage, and that it is because of this heritage that we still believe the individual is the indispensable unit of freedom with rights that cannot be taken from him, that he does have these capacities that make him fit for self-government, and that all of these were given him by his God in creation and can be perfected by the act of redemption.

We must condition ourselves and our society to the fact that these ideologies are incompatible and that conflict is inevitable.

This conflict need not be armed conflict if those who claim to be "heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ" will perform their mission with devotion on the frontiers of ideological conflict. We are not to seek the extinction of the Communist but their redemption. We must not seek the obliteration of his person, or his country but their transformation by the Power that has proven it can change a world. This doctrine, this power must be injected into the warp and woof of our own society and projected behind the iron curtains of the world in every way possible---or we perish! Our own national salvation rests upon the rebirth of the passion and the principles and the Person that gave birth to our Western heritage. If there is a hesitancy to return to these basic principles, let us hear again the words of Lenin,

"It is inconceivable that the Soviet Republic should continue to exist for a long period of time side by side with imperialist states. Ultimately, one or the other must conquer." -



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Lenin, Collected Works, Vol XXIV, p. 122

<sup>2</sup>(Edited) Marxism and the National Question, pp. 121-124,  
Stalins report to the 10th All-Russian Congress of Soviets, December  
26, 1922.

<sup>3</sup>Sheen, op. cit. p. 52

<sup>4</sup>Sheen, op. cit. preface.

<sup>5</sup>Sheen, op. cit. p. 49.

<sup>6</sup>Lenin, loc. cit.

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SYNOPSIS

Many see the confrontation of the United States of America and allies against the Communist bloc nations as purely political. Chaplain Massey views the conflict from another dimension: the spiritual. The heritage of the Western nations is religious he contends, based upon the concepts of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The heritage of which he speaks is more than a political framework. Rather it is composed of

those ideals and "natural facts" that declare man is a divinely created being of an intrinsic worth because God has bestowed upon him these certain rights and given him a peculiar dignity above all the creation. These are rights that cannot be bestowed or withdrawn by the state.

(page 8)

These assumptions about human rights are categorically denied by the advocates of Marxist-Leninist Communism. The arena of conflict becomes ideological, and the combatants evangelists. The Western heritage (also called Christianity, Christian Society, and the Church — often interchangeably by the author) regards Communism as a "religious deviation"; a "religious antithesis" to its "religious thesis." To the assumption that "man is free because God made him free" Marx replies (through the interpretation of Emil Brunner)

"Man is free only if he owes his existence to himself". Therefore the recognition of a God, being identical with the loss of independence [sic], is the beginning of unfreedom. Therefore mankind can regain its freedom only by shaking [sic] off this double dependence [sic], i.e. by overcoming the capitalist division of labor through communism and by shaking [sic] off religion. In the classless society man owes his existence to himself. Therefore communism and atheism are linked together with God. The abolition of capitalism is at the same time the abolition of religion. (page 22)

The success of Communism in gaining control of governments is well known. The possibility of our own country and way of life being conquered by Communism is considered to be a real threat . . . but not by force of arms. Chaplain Massey views the danger of subversion to be through spiritual means.

It has been within the liberal and secular atmosphere of the modern Western world that communism received its birth. The wave of secular and skeptical liberalism that has swept across the Western world since the eighteenth century has created this tragic void in the Western soul. It has been this very same paganization of culture that not only gave rise to communism, but also has so weakened our national fabric that it has opened up the restraining dams and bulwarks built up against such "isms" through the years by our long Christian heritage. Because these are weakened we are now threatened with a flood of atheistic totalitarianism. (page 32)

"Communism can never exist where the culture is truly Christian" concludes the author, and he believes that the remedy that will not only save our country but also reclaim the Communists is a "revival of the religion that produced our Western heritage."